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ABSTRACT

This monograph provides a framework for analyzing and evaluating the soundness of teacher education reform proposals. Key questions covering five areas that may be addressed to various proposals are presented: (1) problem definition; (2) solutions proposed; (3) rationale for the problem definition and proposed solutions; (4) feasibility of solutions; and (5) underlying assumptions. Specific questions are discussed along with a rationale for why each of these questions is an important part of a framework for analyzing teacher education reform reports. A demonstration of how the framework can be used to assess the recommendations in any reform report applies the questions to the following recent reports: (1) the Holmes Group report, "Tomorrow's Teachers"; (2) the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession report, "A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century"; and (3) the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Redesign. (JD)

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FASTBACK

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How Should Teachers Be Educated? An Assessment of Three Reform Reports

Alan R. Tom

PHI DELTA KAPPA
EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

ALAN R. TOM

Alan R. Tom is professor and chair of the Department of Education at Washington University in St. Louis. He is a past president of the Association of Independent Liberal Arts Colleges for Teacher Education, composed of 160 private colleges and universities that prepare teachers.

Tom has been involved personally with two of the reform proposals discussed in this fastback. He participated in the group that planned the Holmes Group agenda at the time the group expanded from 27 to 39 deans of schools of education in spring 1985, and he has been nominated to be a member of the Board of Examiners created as part of NCATE's redesign.

Tom is author of *Teaching as a Moral Craft* and has published on such topics as the redesign of teacher education programs, program accreditation, and the relationship of educational research and practice.

How Should Teachers Be Educated? An Assessment of Three Reform Reports

by
Alan R. Tom

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The chapter sponsors this fastback to honor the memory of Dr. Weldon G. Bradtmueller (1924 - 1986). Dr. Bradtmueller taught at Northern Illinois University for 18 years, where he served on the reading faculty in the College of Education. Active in the Illinois Reading Council, the International Reading Association, and the College Reading Association, Dr. Bradtmueller also was an active Kappan for more than 30 years. He gave willingly of his time and talents to be of service to others. He was a professional educator of the highest order.

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Introduction

Nothing is more American than reforming education through reports prepared by blue-ribbon committees. From the Committee of Ten in the late nineteenth century down to the blizzard of reports initiated in 1983 by *A Nation at Risk*, we have seen panels of experts attempting to identify the ills of elementary and secondary schools and to propose "needed" changes. Historically these proposed changes usually have focused on the school curriculum, but in recent years attention also has been directed to merit pay and teacher evaluation, the academic quality of those who enter teaching, the working conditions of teachers, and other issues related to teachers and the profession of teaching.

Once teachers became the object of national reports, it was inevitable that teacher education would come under the scrutiny of the reformers. Those teacher education reports are now out, including such efforts as the National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education's *A Call for Change in Teacher Education*, the Southern Regional Education Board's *Improving Teacher Education: An Agenda for Higher Education and the Schools*, and the California Commission on the Teaching Profession's *Who Will Teach Our Children?* There also have been numerous reports commissioned by governors and state departments of education.

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Those committees that have proposed reforms in teacher education want the reader to accept their proposals and to work to put these proposals into practice. The committee's role is to propose; the reader's role is to accept and to implement. But problems arise. Not all of the teacher education reform reports contain the same recommendations. Moreover, some of the recommendations are in conflict with one another. Even if these recommendations were not in conflict, there still is the problem that more recommendations are made than can possibly be implemented. Thus, decisions must be made about which recommendations are most important and ought to be given priority. Further, recommendations are made that often go beyond the power and authority of those involved in teacher preparation to implement. Because of differing and often conflicting reform proposals, large in number and wide-ranging in scope, the reader must sort through these recommendations and determine which ones merit support.

A major purpose of this fastback is to provide the reader with a framework for analyzing and evaluating the soundness of teacher education reform proposals. This framework will take the form of key questions with which the thoughtful consumer can address the various proposals in the reports. These questions cover five areas: 1) problem definition, 2) solutions proposed, 3) rationale for the problem definition and proposed solutions, 4) feasibility of solutions, and 5) underlying assumptions. The specific questions are discussed in the next section, along with a rationale for why each of these questions is an important part of a framework for analyzing teacher education reform reports.

I shall apply this framework to the three reports currently receiving the most attention: *NCATE Redesign;* the Holmes Group report, *Tomorrow's Teachers;* and the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century.* I shall summarize the essential elements of each of these reform reports and then assess each report using the key questions from the framework. By using the key questions in the framework and applying them to each of the three reports, the reader can check the author's analysis and conclusions.

A second major purpose of this fastback is to show how the analytic framework, as applied to three of the most widely discussed reform reports, can be used to assess the recommendations contained in any teacher education reform report. By using these three reports as models, it should make it easier for the reader to see how to use the framework in analyzing other teacher education reform reports. In the end I place as much or more emphasis on the ability to ask good questions about the various reports as I do on the specific recommendations contained in any of the reform reports.

Even though there have been a number of reports proposing reforms in teacher education over the years, the professional teacher preparation curriculum has remained essentially the same for more than 50 years. Foundations courses in educational psychology and the history and philosophy of education are followed by so-called methods courses, which in turn are followed by practice teaching. Keeping in mind the long-term stability of the structure and content of the professional curriculum, I think that we ought not become overly concerned about the current reports unless there are compelling reasons to suggest that their proposals are extremely important. In the past, reports have come and gone, to little lasting effect. We must therefore have a framework of analytical questions with which to separate banal recommendations from significant ones. It is to this framework of questions that I now turn.

A Framework for Assessing Reforms in Teacher Education

The framework I propose has five major questions, each of which focuses on some aspect of the way the problem is defined and the way solutions to that problem are proposed and explicated:

1. *Problem definition*. What are viewed as the central problems with the current approach to teacher education?

2. *Solutions proposed*. What solutions are proposed to overcome the identified problems?

3. *Rationale for problem definition and proposed solutions*. Is there reasoned argument to defend why the problem is defined the way it is? Is there reasoned argument to explain why the proposed solutions are an appropriate and prudent response to the identified problems?

4. *Feasibility of solutions*. Is it possible for the proposed solutions to be implemented? Is there a series of steps or a plan outlined by which we can move from the current teacher education program to the proposed new program?

5. *Assumptions*. What, if any, assumptions are made by the proponents of a particular reform proposal? These assumptions may apply to either the problem definition or the proposed solutions, or they may underly the entire teacher education reform proposal.

In the remainder of this section I shall discuss the meaning of each of the key questions and give examples, when appropriate, to clarify the significance of the five key questions.

To ask what are the central problems with the current approach to teacher education is to raise the question of what issues a particular reform proposal is addressing. Often these problems are explicitly identified, but sometimes such problems can be inferred only by examining proposed solutions. For example, when the Holmes Group proposes that elementary teachers should have more in-depth study of subjects commonly taught in the elementary school curriculum, then the problem being addressed is the alleged lack of subject-matter knowledge of the typical elementary teacher. In this case, the link between a root problem and its solution is so clear that the problem being addressed is self-evident. But in other cases the link between a proposed solution and a root problem is not so obvious. For instance, the Carnegie Task Force proposal that a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards be created is a solution that might be linked to several differing ways of identifying a problem (for example, the need to standardize what it means to be a teacher, the need to use outcome measures to define good teaching, and so forth). Thus, the reader must sometimes press to be sure that the central problems are explicitly identified before moving to the second question of identifying solutions.

What solutions are proposed to overcome the identified problems? Generally this question is the easiest of the five to answer, as most reform reports are organized around an agenda of answers. *NCATE Redesign*, for instance, proposes five groups of standards that are to be used for judging the quality of teacher education programs; the Holmes Group report endorses five major goals. Usually all the reader has to do to identify the solutions is to analyze carefully the structure of the report.

The third question, about whether there is reasoned argument to support the way the problem is defined and the specific solution or solutions proposed, is more difficult. The first two questions concentrate on being clear about the nature of the problem and of the proposed solutions; the third question looks at how good a case is made both for the particular way the problem is defined and for the solutions proposed.

There is no ready formula for deciding what constitutes a reasoned argument. In the case of problem definition, a reform report ought

to offer, at the least, some evidence that the problem is a real one. In the earlier example concerning the subject-matter knowledge of elementary teachers, it should be reasonable to expect the Holmes report to provide data on the alleged lack of knowledge of the typical elementary teacher. These data might be in the form of comparative test scores, surveys of typical content courses taken by elementary teachers-in-training, or some other form of relevant evidence. But in addition to data-based evidence, we also should expect a reasoned case for why the identified problem is an important one. Why, for example, is it important for elementary teachers to know more subject matter than they currently do. Presumably, more subject-matter knowledge makes the teacher better prepared to understand and teach this content to youngsters. Is this claim explained and defended?

When we evaluate reasoned arguments for proposed solutions, we should look for evidence not only that the solution can be expected to address the problem topic but also that the solution is logically related to the identified problem. For example, one of the Holmes proposals is that teacher preparation be lengthened to include a fifth or even a sixth year of preparation on the rationale that such extended preparation would enhance the status of the teaching profession and ultimately attract more talented people into teaching. Is there a logical connection between graduate-level teacher education and enhanced status for teaching? Further, is there any evidence that extended teacher preparation would attract more talented people into teaching? Both of these issues are speculative, but assessing them is critical when deciding whether the Holmes solution of extending teacher preparation is a wise one.

Asking whether a solution is feasible is to question how practical a solution is and whether there are clearly defined steps for implementing the solution. This fourth question focusing on feasibility is often asked too soon, before the nature of problems and solutions is clarified or before the rationale for a particular solution is examined. The feasibility of almost any major reform in teacher education can be challenged, for no other reason than that major reforms are difficult to achieve. Thus I believe that it is wise to suspend questions of feasibility until problems and solutions have been thoroughly evaluated.

But let us not prematurely reject reforms just because they are hard to accomplish.

The fifth, and last, question entails what assumptions are made by the proponents of a particular reform. These assumptions frequently are discussed only briefly. Moreover, they sometimes are simply taken for granted, for example, the assumption that prospective elementary teachers need more subject-matter knowledge in order to be more productive purveyors of this knowledge. In reality there is little research evidence to suggest that added study of a subject on the part of elementary teachers leads to more learning on the part of students, unless this study by teachers occurs in upper-division courses. Whether assumptions appear to be obvious or whether they involve fundamental blind spots, they merit close examination to see how accurate they are.

In the next three sections, I shall discuss three major teacher education reform proposals, keeping in mind the framework of five questions. Space does not allow applying all five questions to each of the three proposals. Instead, I shall highlight the questions that often do not receive much attention, particularly those dealing with problem definition and examination of assumptions.

The pattern I shall generally follow with each reform proposal is to summarize how the problem is defined, outline the major proposed solutions, offer some critical comment on the logical relationship of solutions to problems, and evaluate several assumptions that seem to underlie each reform report. I shall not cover the intricacies of problem definition or the feasibility of solutions proposed, although the reader is invited to do these kinds of analysis and evaluation.

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The Holmes Group Report

In 1983 the deans of schools or colleges of education from 17 research-oriented universities began meeting with the rather modest goal of trying to find ways to improve teacher education in their own universities. With some limited external funding, this group was able to get together periodically over a three-year period to discuss what was wrong with teacher education in their institutions and how it might be improved. The number of deans participating in these discussions grew gradually from 17 to 23, and by the spring of 1985 numbered 39. The size of the group was not the only change that occurred over the three-year period: Private foundations' interest in the group's effort increased; some deans who were left out attacked the Holmes Group as being elitist; and a subset of the 39 deans formed an Executive Board, the group that eventually approved the final report, *Tomorrow's Teachers*. But the most fundamental change during the three years involved the purpose of the group.

In an early funding proposal, the Holmes deans said their focus was on identifying and remedying "self-acknowledged problems." This proposal readily admitted that a major barrier to improving their own programs was "an apparent disdain for, or at least disinterest in, teacher education on the part of the leading research universities in the United States." However, by the spring of 1986, when the final report was issued, the mission of the Holmes Group had become the

rethinking and reform of teacher education in *all* higher education institutions. Indeed, the proposed reform extended beyond teacher education to include the teaching profession itself. The Holmes Group, according to the report's preface, "wishes to see nothing less than the transformation of teaching from an occupation into a genuine profession."

In its pursuit of the twin purposes of reforming teacher education and the teaching profession, the Holmes Group report focuses on five major goals:

1. To make the education of teachers intellectually sound.
2. To recognize differences in knowledge, skill, and commitment among teachers.
3. To create relevant and defensible standards of entry to the teaching profession.
4. To connect schools of education with elementary and secondary schools in their communities.
5. To make schools better places for practicing teachers to work and learn.

As I discuss each of these five goals, I will highlight the key recommendations relevant to each goal and comment on how well these key recommendations (solutions) respond to the problems identified in the Holmes Group report.

Goal One

To make the education of teachers more intellectually sound calls for four distinct kinds of knowledge: liberal education, the subject matter of the teaching field, the literature of education, and reflective practical experience. The central recommendation of the Holmes Group is that we need more time to prepare the teacher in these four kinds of knowledge and that the proper way to obtain this added time is to restrict the undergraduate years to an improved liberal arts education, coupled with expanded study in the subject matter of one's teaching field. As a result, a teacher's professional education will be

moved to the graduate level, with nothing more than an introductory education course or two being retained in the undergraduate curriculum, thus eliminating the undergraduate major in education. There also is discussion concerning improving the quality of liberal arts and subject-matter study, but the emphasis is on lengthening this study and moving professional education to the graduate level.

Is this solution of expanded academic study, with professional education postponed until graduate level, a reasonable response to the problems the Holmes deans believe exist in teacher education? The argument that more liberal arts education is better for teachers does not make much sense unless the quality of this education is improved (Tom, in press). Moreover, improving the quality of the undergraduate arts and sciences curriculum, which has been resistant to prior attempts at reform, is unlikely when the deans of education proposing these reforms no longer admit students at the undergraduate level and therefore no longer can require particular arts and sciences courses for specific teacher education majors (Mehlinger 1986). In brief, I am arguing that the length of the program of studies, by itself, is an irrelevant consideration and that by abandoning the undergraduate teacher education program, deans of education lose whatever leverage they currently have for improving the quality of arts and sciences instruction at the baccalaureate level.

Furthermore, even if we were to grant that a longer teacher preparation curriculum is desirable, no case is made in the Holmes Group report for the sequence of study proposed. Why must study in the arts and sciences precede study in professional education? Why must both undergraduate and graduate study come prior to the initial teaching position? Certainly this arrangement fits well with the degree structure common in the graduate-oriented institutions constituting the Holmes Group. In other divisions of those institutions, graduate study in a profession usually comes after initial study in arts and sciences (engineering, fine arts, and music are exceptions). But teaching is a profession in which arts and sciences knowledge is not preparatory to subsequent professional study; rather, it is central to the daily performance of the classroom teacher. Thus, there is no reason that arts and sciences and professional education could not be

studied concurrently from the undergraduate years through a master's degree.

Another possibility would be to have an undergraduate teacher education program followed by a few years of teaching experience, after which there would be a semester or year-long sabbatical in one or more areas of subject-matter study and professional studies. This approach acknowledges that learning to teach is a developmental process in which how one views subject matter, students, and teaching does change after a few years of experience. Moreover, a sabbatical can be a rejuvenating experience. But such possibilities do not fit the Holmes model in which professional education must be delayed until the graduate level and must occur prior to assuming a teaching position. The Holmes Group proposal limits teacher preparation to a single model, which places the professional course sequence at the graduate level and also lengthens the time of the teacher education program. Neither of these proposals is rooted in a careful analysis of the problems identified in existing approaches to teacher education.

Goal Two

The second major goal of the Holmes Group report concerns the recognition that teachers differ in their knowledge, skill, and commitment. Here the Holmes Group is recommending a restructuring of the teaching profession into three levels of authority and responsibility. At the top are the *career professional teachers* who would have responsibility not only for their own classrooms but also for providing staff development, supervising the classroom work of so-called instructors, and working in teacher education programs. At the second level are the *professional teachers* who are autonomous teachers in the classroom. At the third level are the *instructors*, who would be in the classroom for only a few years, since the Holmes Group report makes no provision for instructors to move up to professional teacher status. Instructors would be under the close supervision of a career professional teacher.

The professional teacher level, with a full teaching certificate, would be granted only after the completion of a master's degree. The career

professional teacher level would be granted to teachers whose continued study and professional accomplishments indicate outstanding achievements as a teacher. At the instructor level would be college graduates who have had "a solid academic background in one or two subjects" and who can "pass an entrance exam." After several months of full-time professional study, these persons would assume limited instructional responsibility and would be replaced in a few years by other instructors.

The rationale for this three-tiered staff structure, with different levels of responsibility and of pay, addresses two main considerations. First, by employing instructors we could even out shifts in the supply and demand for teachers without resorting to the hiring of "unqualified warm bodies." Second, the provision for the career professional teacher – perhaps 20% of the teaching force – creates a career advancement line for professional teachers who do not want to go into administration or to leave teaching in order to further their careers. Both of these considerations are valid reasons for establishing a differentiated staff structure within the teaching profession.

At the same time, there are at least two problems with the three-tier structure proposed by the Holmes Group. While the idea of a differentiated teaching staff can be traced back to the nineteenth century, we have only limited experience in trying these alternative structures. During the 1950s and early 1960s, a time of teacher shortage, an attempt was made to differentiate the work of teachers by developing teacher teams headed by "team leaders" or "master teachers." Experimentation occurred at several places around the country. Judson Shaplin and Henry Olds wrote a book on the problems encountered in creating teaching teams. However, little experimentation has occurred with team teaching in the last 20 years (Keppel 1986), except for a few isolated attempts such as Individually Guided Education and team teaching in a multi-unit school (Nussel 1986). Thus the Holmes Group proposal for a differentiated staff structure is largely untested.

A second problem with the three-tiered structure is that the limited professional preparation of those at the instructor level could undercut the case for the professional status of teaching by lowering entry standards. Moreover, teaching in the public schools is considerably

more complex than the central task the Holmes Group report gives to instructors, namely, that they "interact with others about a subject they know well." Unquestionably, subject-matter preparation is essential to teaching success; but to allow large numbers of liberal arts graduates to teach in public school classrooms, even under supervision, without significant pedagogical competence in such areas as student motivation, subject-matter organization, questioning skills, and student assessment is questionable if not foolhardy. Lastly, the use of a revolving underclass of instructors ignores the importance of staff stability and the avoidance of status differentials for fostering collegiality, curricular coherence, and the shared purposes that are characteristic of effective schools (Tom 1986).

I conclude, therefore, that the rationale for differentiating teaching roles is incomplete. On the one hand, such a role structure could be very useful in dealing with the supply-demand shifts of elementary and secondary teaching; and if there were significant salary differentials between the levels, there would be a real incentive for keeping ambitious and productive teachers in the profession. On the other hand, we have precious little knowledge about how to create workable role structures that are grounded in real differences in authority and supervisory responsibility. Moreover, the conception of the instructor role seems to have several flaws.

Goal Three

The third major goal of the Holmes Group report is creating relevant and defensible standards of entry to the teaching profession. Essentially, the argument is that in order to ensure the competence of its members, the teaching profession must develop and implement a series of professional teacher examinations. The examinations would assess basic writing and speaking skills as well as pedagogical skills and mastery of subject matter. Also, prospective teachers would have to demonstrate their ability to analyze and evaluate a variety of teaching styles, including their own. In order to become a professional teacher, a candidate would have to have earned a master's degree and also pass these written examinations and practice-based evalua-

tions. Essentially, the Holmes Group is proposing that the teaching profession adopt a licensure examination, an approach commonly used in other professions.

A licensure examination is a significant departure from the approach currently used in most states. In order to obtain a state teaching certificate, a prospective teacher generally has to complete a program approved by the state department of education or by an independent board of teaching. In addition to completing this state "approved program," some states now require exit tests, but these tests have rarely been as comprehensive as what is being proposed by the Holmes Group.

While there are limitations to exit or licensure tests, limitations readily acknowledged by the Holmes Group, the deans make a substantial case for licensure tests as a reasonable way to assure the public that teachers possess certain knowledge and skills essential to becoming competent practitioners.

Goal Four

The fourth major goal of the Holmes Group report is to connect schools of education with elementary and secondary schools. The rationale for strengthening these ties is that the improvement and professionalization of teaching depends on providing teachers and professors with opportunities to create knowledge about the profession, and on providing teachers with collegial relationships beyond their immediate working environment. Also, the improvement of teacher education depends on developing pedagogical knowledge and reflective practice in a realistic setting. Thus the Holmes Group recommends the creation of professional development schools, analogous to teaching hospitals in the medical profession. Such schools would be characterized by reciprocity (the mutual exchange between research and practice), experimentation and inquiry (a willingness to study and try new forms of practice), and diversity (a commitment to develop teaching strategies for children with differing backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles).

The idea of such professional development schools is well-accepted within mainline teacher education. One of the earliest rationales for such schools was outlined in 1967 by Robert Schaefer in *The School as a Center of Inquiry.* In the same year Arthur Bolster explicitly called for these special schools, which would operate on the same principles as teaching hospitals. And in the 1970s a number of models of professional development schools were piloted. The Holmes Group fails to acknowledge these models and rationales, which could have been used to help substantiate its case.

Goal Five

The fifth and last major goal of the Holmes Group report is to make schools better places in which teachers can work and learn. This goal is different from the first four goals, which involve improving professional preparation, developing a differentiated structure of teaching roles, creating better standards of entry, and connecting schools of education with elementary and secondary schools. With this fifth goal, the Holmes Group suggests that the existing structure of schools – particularly its division of authority between administrators and teachers – is seriously inconsistent with the nature of the new professional teacher to be created by implementing the first four goals. This new professional teacher will need less administrative supervision and external support than is now generally thought necessary. The Holmes Group deans do seem to be committed to changing the authority structure and working conditions within the schools to make them more compatible with the increased authority and responsibility given to the professional and career professional teachers.

This rationale for rethinking the authority relationships in a school does seem internally consistent if we accept the first four major goals. If the concept of the professional and career professional teacher is sound, then the role of the school administrator must be reconceptualized. Just as hospital administrators do not supervise the professional work of physicians, so building principals need not supervise the classroom activities of professional teachers. While the Holmes Group does not state the issue so baldly, its report clearly presumes

that the professional teacher will have much more autonomy than classroom teachers currently possess.

The five major goals of the Holmes Group are generally worthy of support; several of them represent goals long pursued by many teacher educators. For example, who opposes making better connections between schools of education and the public schools, or making schools more professional places in which to work, or creating relevant and defensible standards of entry, or making the education of teachers more intellectually sound? A few may have reservations about formalizing differences in knowledge, skill, and commitment among teachers – perhaps more on grounds of feasibility than that it is not a good idea. But the Holmes Group report follows a pattern of converting a goal into a particular structure and then prescribing that structure as if it were the *only way* of reaching the goal.

In some cases this tendency creates no special problem, since there is a broad consensus on the prescribed structure, such as the professional development school idea. Moreover, the concept of a professional development school also is rather flexible, since no particular form of professional development school is prescribed. Another goal that is turned into a structure but has some flexibility is the conversion of the entry standards goal into a series of exit tests. Exactly what types of tests should be implemented is left somewhat open, and proper cautions are expressed about the validity of standardized licensure tests.

However, in the case of the first goal of making the education of teachers intellectually sound, this broad goal is reduced to a very specific structure. The structure involves converting the undergraduate years to liberal arts study and a subject-matter specialty, and postponing professional preparation to graduate study requiring a master's degree. The undergraduate and graduate structure is rigidly prescribed, and membership in the Holmes Group requires committing the institution to that structure and agreeing to implement it – even before the differentiated staff structure, to which it is supposed to feed, has been established. Thus to belong to the Holmes Group one must agree *not* to recommend a teaching certificate for anyone completing an undergraduate teacher education program. These students could, at best,

become short-term instructors. Only students completing the prescribed undergraduate-graduate sequence are to be recommended for the professional teacher status, even though that status does not yet exist. It remains to be seen whether the Holmes Group has either the prestige or the political muscle to influence states to adopt the three-tiered staff structure of instructor, professional teacher, and career professional teacher. Clearly, the Holmes Group must sort through many sticky questions as a result of its converting a broad goal into a hypothetical yet specific structure.

Holmes Group Assumptions

I want to comment briefly on two assumptions made by the Holmes Group, both of which seem to be of doubtful validity and therefore to pose problems for the overall recommendations. The first assumption concerns the considerable faith expressed in the Holmes Group report about the impending arrival of a science of education. To quote from the report: "Reforming the education of teachers depends upon engaging in the complex work of identifying *the* knowledge base for competent teaching, and developing the content and strategies whereby it is imparted" (emphasis added). Further: "The science of education promised by Dewey, Thorndike, and others at the turn of the century, has become more tangible. . . . The promise of science of education is about to be fulfilled."

Ironically, researchers in those very institutions represented by the deans in the Holmes Group rarely make such extravagant claims about the "knowledge base for competent teaching." Typical of the more cautious position researchers take concerning the direct applicability of research findings to practice is that of Christopher Clark and Magdalene Lampert (1986). After reviewing some of the recent research on teacher thinking, they conclude that the main value of such research is to reveal some of the complexities of teaching. They note that recent research on teacher thinking challenges "the image of research as a source of empirically proven and generalizable prescriptions." Clark and Lampert believe that the role of research is to help teachers understand practice rather than to dictate practice to them.

When the Holmes Group refers to *the* knowledge base about competent teaching and heralds the coming science of education, there is reason to doubt these claims. There is no single, agreed-on knowledge base on what teaching strategies constitute effective teaching, nor is there any compelling reason to believe that such a knowledge base is about to be discovered. What we do know is that researchers on teaching have tended to underestimate the complexity of the teaching-learning process and that, until recently, many researchers on teaching did believe that their findings could be converted into prescriptions for practice. Thorndike's faith in a science of education persisted for many years. Only in the last few decades have researchers realized how situation-specific effective teaching is and how dependent effective teaching is on the teacher's ability to analyze students' thinking processes. Skilled teachers have long known these lessons of effective teaching.

So what is the significance of this assumption about an impending science of education? I would argue that the role of the research-oriented university in improving teacher education is much less important than the Holmes Group presumes. In many ways researchers in these institutions merely are rediscovering what thoughtful and reflective teachers have known for many years. To argue that only those institutions where simplistic, and sometimes misleading, research on teaching was long conducted should now assume the leadership in reforming professional teacher education seems questionable.

A second underlying assumption of the Holmes Group is that one can advocate a series of reform proposals without any consideration given to what is lost if these proposals are implemented. Specifically, what are the hidden costs of implementing the five- to six-year model of teacher preparation recommended by the Holmes Group. There are at least three such hidden costs (Tom, n.d.).

The most troubling hidden cost is that the very set of proposals designed to attract better teachers may actually result in narrowing the talent pool of prospective teachers. The proposal to extend the time required for teacher preparation is more expensive for the student. This probably will lead some talented young people to consider alternative careers that have shorter training periods and have the

promise of greater financial reward. In particular, we may lose talented minority students to other careers at the very time when enrollments of minority students in our schools are increasing. I am not arguing that only minority teachers can be effective with minority youngsters, but I do see the need for balanced teaching staffs with some serving as role models for minority youth. The Holmes Group report discusses only briefly the low representation of minorities in the teaching force.

A second hidden cost of implementing the extended teacher preparation proposal is that it will reduce the diversity of colleges and universities offering teacher preparation programs. The type of institution most hard hit by the Holmes Group proposals is likely to be the four-year liberal arts college. Many of these colleges will have to drop teacher education, since they do not offer graduate programs in education. Historically these colleges have prepared a significant number of teachers, many of whom have become talented and dedicated professionals. While talented students in liberal arts colleges might be persuaded to delay their professional studies until the graduate years, we do not know whether this would happen. In any case, the richness and variety of these liberal arts institutions would be lost to the population of teacher education institutions.

The third hidden cost of mandating a longer teacher preparation period and requiring a master's degree is that it has directed the reform debate toward procedural and structural issues rather than toward substantive ones. Lost in all this discussion and debate over the one best structure for preparing teachers is the key question of what ought to compose the professional studies curriculum for teachers. The curriculum issue has literally been ignored, other than for some vague statements in the Holmes Group report that more research-based knowledge on effective teaching ought to be included in professional studies. As I indicated earlier, this recommendation is simplistic and not even necessarily consistent with the modest role most researchers see for their scholarship. What ought teachers know and be able to do? This key question has been a casualty in the debate over the relative merits of four-year versus extended teacher preparation.

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The Carnegie Task Force Report

Unlike the Holmes Group report, which focuses on teacher education, the report of the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, looks at teacher education only in the larger context of reforming the entire profession of teaching. The Carnegie report also differs from the Holmes Group report in other ways. For example, the Carnegie report argues for the economic value of education to establish "the primacy of education as the foundation of economic growth," whereas the Holmes Group report ignores the purposes of education and concentrates on the reform of teacher education and the teaching profession.

The Holmes Group's focus on teacher education is understandable since the group was composed entirely of deans of schools of education. By contrast, the 14 members of the Carnegie Task Force included two business leaders, two governors, one state legislator, one journalist, one consultant, an official of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, two chief state school officers, an expert on Hispanic affairs, two teacher union leaders, and only one dean of education. Yet the two groups arrived at similar conclusions (Keppel 1986).

Neither group is pleased with the working conditions of teachers, although the Carnegie Task Force places considerably more emphasis on specific problems with these working conditions, such as in-

adequate support staff for teachers, the lack of time for reflection by teachers, the need for significantly higher teacher salaries, the desirability of school-site budgeting, and so forth. Both groups endorse differentiated staffing, even though each has its own set of labels for the various levels. And the two reports agree that teachers at different levels ought to be paid salaries commensurate with the level. Moreover, both groups suggest that professional teacher education ought to be extended into the graduate school, after the prospective teacher receives a bachelor's degree in arts and sciences. Yet another commonality is the call for professional development schools in the case of the Holmes Group and clinical schools in the case of Carnegie – both based on the teaching hospital model. Lastly, both groups believe fundamental reform can occur only if a cluster of reforms is initiated and pursued.

Since there are so many similarities between the reform platforms of the two groups, it would be redundant to describe and analyze those Carnegie recommendations that are in essential agreement with the Holmes Group proposals. My evaluation of the Holmes Group's rationales for extended teacher preparation and differentiated staffing hold true in large part for the comparable proposals made by the Carnegie Task Force. Instead, I shall focus on the Carnegie proposals for teacher education that differ substantially from the Holmes Group recommendations. These differences include some of the central elements of the Carnegie report, even though they take up only about 10% of the written report.

The Carnegie Task Force's discussion of teacher education differs in tone from that in the Holmes Group report. Whereas the Holmes Group report takes considerable space to discuss the barriers to improving teacher education and to criticize overreliance on simplistic reforms and naive views of what constitutes good teaching, the Carnegie Task Force begins its discussion of teacher education with the bold statement that "teacher education must meet much higher standards." With one broad sweep, the Carnegie Task Force asserts that teacher education is a mess. Good rhetoric perhaps, but does it accurately describe the condition of teacher education today?

The Carnegie report follows the lead of the Holmes Group report (released just a few months earlier) by arguing that four years of col-

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lege "is not enough time to master the subjects to be taught and acquire the skills to teach them." The undergraduate years "should be wholly devoted to a broad liberal education and a thorough grounding in the subjects to be taught." Professional education, therefore, should occur at the graduate level. Yet the very next sentence contains the statement that "an alternative might be to combine the undergraduate program and a graduate degree program, awarding both the bachelor's and the graduate degree." Cannot the Carnegie Task Force make up its mind?

The answer, I believe, is not so much that the Carnegie Task Force is confused as that it is focused more on pursuing broad outcomes rather than on prescribing a specific set of degree structures. The emphasis, according to the Carnegie report, "must be on what teachers need to know and be able to do." The mechanism for identifying and assessing these outcomes is to be a newly created National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, composed mostly of teachers but also including other education professionals, public officials, and public members. The major function of the Board would be to establish high standards of teaching competence and issue certificates to teachers who meet those standards.

The assessment instruments developed by the Board will stress knowledge in general education, subject matter, and good teaching practices in general as well as for specific subjects. Moreover, evaluation must include assessment of the candidate's ability to motivate and produce learning in students from many different backgrounds. Assessment techniques would include both formal observation and written examinations. Board certification would be an extremely rigorous process, possibly leading the holders of this certification to be in great demand because of the national recognition of their expertise.

Because certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards focuses on expertise – what teachers should know and be able to do – the Carnegie Task Force apparently feels no need to prescribe a single model of teacher preparation. The Carnegie report does favor a master's degree approach to professional education but also suggests that alternatives are possible. These alternatives might include a combined bachelor's and master's program that inte-

grates academic and professional work, or programs existing outside the university context, or possibly even programs conducted entirely at the undergraduate level. In a key passage, the Carnegie Task Force states its belief that programs can be structured in a variety of ways:

> Tying licensure to a single mode of preparation is not the policy the Task Force would recommend. Schools of education will continue to play the primary role in preparing the nation's teachers. Other providers may turn out to be important sources of professional education during the next decade as demand explodes. . . . States can develop alternative routes to teacher preparation which meet standards equal to those in regular university programs. *Board certification or an equivalent performance standard should be the measure of a candidate's readiness to teach, however he or she is prepared.* [emphasis added]

The reason the Carnegie Task Force avoids prescriptions for the best structure for teacher preparation is that this question is not viewed as the major issue. The major issue is what the teacher should know and be able to do, regardless of the structural arrangements of the preparation curriculum. I view this approach as a healthy sign, because it gives teacher education institutions the latitude to create programs designed to prepare prospective teachers for the essential knowledge and abilities to be assessed by the National Board. Fortunately, there seems little inclination on the part of the Carnegie Task Force to mandate particular curricula or structures, although it does want to eliminate the undergraduate major in education.

I find Carnegie's focus on essential teacher knowledge and abilities to be a more substantial goal than the Holmes Group's concern with instituting graduate-level professional education infused with research-based knowledge. The Carnegie focus on teacher preparation outcomes keeps before us the key question of what is central to good teaching: What ought the good teacher know and be able to do? The proposed National Board will have to wrestle with what standards will guide the assessment of its board-certified teachers. All that the Carnegie Task Force recommends in the way of standards is a good general education, mastery of subject matter, knowledge

of good teaching practices, and the ability to motivate and foster learning in students from varied backgrounds. That is as specific as the Carnegie report gets.

If the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards heeds the intent of the Carnegie report, its assessment will include much more craft knowledge of practicing teachers than will the professional curriculum envisioned by the Holmes Group deans. The Holmes Group deans believe we are on the verge of developing a science of education that will dramatically improve the quality of the professional curriculum. By contrast, the Carnegie report regards formal research on teaching and learning as supplementing the knowledge gained from the experience of outstanding teachers. The Task Force is "particularly concerned that the [National Board] assessment take into account the accumulated wisdom of teachers." In fact, mention of formal research is almost entirely absent from the Carnegie report, except for discussions of the labor market for teachers and the improvement of measurement tools (Keppel 1986).

The "accumulated wisdom of teachers" is an extremely potent source of knowledge and practice concerning good teaching, but neither this knowledge nor practice is codified so that others can draw on the experience of outstanding teachers. Only rarely have such teachers formulated what they have learned about effective teaching into principles or concepts that can be passed on to others. Indeed, many first-rate classroom teachers attribute their success to enthusiasm, persistence, love of children, or other personal attributes that do not distinguish the good teacher from the good parent, or even from the good person.

The Carnegie Task Force's heavy reliance on the accumulated wisdom of teachers and its lack of specificity about standards pose many problems for assessment. Nevertheless, there is considerable power in the idea that certification be grounded in standards emphasizing what teachers should know and be able to do, because the focus remains on substantive questions: What is good teaching? How can good teaching be fostered by the teacher education program? By staff development? Of course, there are also the difficult technical questions of converting specific standards into measurement approaches appropriate for each standard.

In the Holmes Group report the substantive questions are lost because the key issue becomes one of adopting a one-best structure of teacher preparation. Rather than dealing with the substantive questions of what constitutes good teaching and good teacher education, Holmes Group advocates and critics often fall into an unproductive debate over whether graduate teacher preparation is better than undergraduate teacher preparation (Gifford and King 1986).

The Carnegie Task Force seems more forthright in dealing with substantive issues in teacher education than do the Holmes Group deans, but there is a major questionable assumption in the Carnegie report. This assumption is that it is relatively easy to develop means for measuring teacher competence based on student performance and linking that performance to teachers' compensation. In other words, teachers ought to be rewarded for the results they achieve in student learning, and this policy can be implemented. The Carnegie Task Force does acknowledge that "no method that we know of for measuring student performance and connecting it to teachers' rewards is yet satisfactory," and that unless the characteristics of the students are taken into account, teachers will avoid working in those schools with hard-to-teach students. Even after noting these problems, the Carnegie report still emphasizes the importance of measuring teacher productivity in terms of student learning and downplays the difficulties involved in linking teacher pay to student results.

With all this emphasis on measuring productivity on the basis of outcomes, I believe the Carnegie Task Force is inconsistent in its arguments for making teaching a profession. Professionals whose practice deals with human behavior are not held accountable, or paid, on the basis of results; they are held accountable for *following appropriate professional practice*.

Let me illustrate my point with a personal incident. Last year I went to my physician because of a pain in my side, which initially she was not able to diagnose. I paid her because she did what a competent physician would do. She took X-rays, had them read by a radiologist, ordered other clinical tests, and ultimately had a body scan done. She engaged in these professional practices in an attempt to discover why I had a pain in my side. That she failed to diagnose what caused

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my pain until the calcification around the healed rib fracture finally showed up on later X-rays did not free me from my financial obligation to her. I do not judge her as incompetent or as not deserving her fees because the minute fracture in my rib just did not show up on the initial X-rays. She was responsible for neither the smallness of the break nor for the fact that it was in a difficult location to diagnose.

Similarly, the classroom teacher ought not be held accountable for results without careful consideration given to the characteristics of the students, to the difficulty of the teaching task, and to other situational factors over which the teacher has little or no control. I stress this deficiency in the Carnegie report because by overemphasizing student outcomes as a measure of professional competence and by linking outcomes to teacher compensation, the Carnegie Task Force weakens its argument for professionalism centered around the key question: What should teachers know and be able to do? By focusing on student outcomes, the key question becomes what must teachers achieve, not what is appropriate professional practice (based on the knowledge and abilities of the competent teacher).

NCATE Redesign

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the national accrediting agency for higher education institutions that prepare teachers and other school personnel. Since its creation in 1954, NCATE has been using a comprehensive set of standards to accredit (approve) teacher education programs. Initially dominated by higher education institutions, NCATE altered its governance structure to give equal representation to the National Education Association (NEA) in the early 1970s, and in recent years has added a variety of professional associations and interest groups, ranging from the National Council for the Social Studies to the American Association for Counseling and Development.

NCATE differs substantially from both the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Task Force. First, NCATE represents a cross section of the education constituencies interested in teacher preparation, whereas the Holmes Group represents only the deans from research-oriented universities and the Carnegie Task Force represents a mixture of education and non-education constituencies. Second, over a period of three decades NCATE has become the established mechanism for ensuring quality in teacher education programs. The proposals of the Carnegie Task Force and the Holmes Group represent indirect, if not direct, challenges to this established (some would say establishment) mechanism. Third, the standards used by NCATE to accredit pro-

grams are considerably more comprehensive than either the five Holmes Group goals or the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and related approaches recommended by the Carnegie Task Force.

While these factors help us understand how NCATE differs from the Carnegie and Holmes Group proposals, I believe that a more fundamental difference is the way NCATE historically has approached the task of accrediting teacher education programs. The key element in the NCATE approach is whether an institution's programs, described in a written report after a self-study and assessed by a visiting team, meet a very detailed set of standards. Currently these are 23 standards, falling into six groupings: governance; curricula; faculty; students; resources and facilities; and evaluation, program review, and planning. Under the *NCATE Redesign*, adopted in 1985 and to be fully implemented in 1988, there will be 19 standards, but with 94 compliance criteria associated with these 19 standards. The 19 redesigned standards are now clustered into five groupings: knowledge base for professional education, relationship to the world of practice, students, faculty, and governance and resources. In addition, an institution must now meet 11 preconditions in order to be eligible for an accreditation review by NCATE; under the old standards four preconditions were in effect (NCATE 1982, 1986).

To provide a sense of the specificity of both the standards and their associated compliance criteria, I quote the governance standard in the recently adopted *NCATE Redesign* and list three of the eight compliance criteria intended to assess whether an institution meets the standards on governance:

Governance Standard

> The governance system for the professional education unit [department or school of education] ensures that all professional education programs are organized, unified, and coordinated to allow the fulfillment of its mission. The governance system clearly identifies and defines the unit submitted for accreditation, clearly specifies the governance system under which the unit is enabled to fulfill its mission, and demonstrates in practice the system operates as described.

Criteria for Compliance

2) The professional education unit's mission is congruent with the institution's mission. The unit's composition and organizational structure are clearly described and justified in relation to its mission.
5) An officially designated professional educator within the professional education unit is responsible for the management of operations and resources.
7) The structure of the unit ensures participation of practitioners and education students in the governance of the unit.

The five other compliance criteria clarify the meaning of the governance standard and help the visiting team conducting a site visit to make an accurate judgment as to whether the teacher education unit meets the governance standard.

Besides illustrating the specificity of the standards that NCATE uses to judge quality in a teacher education unit, the example of the governance standard also indicates how NCATE standards focus on procedural or process concerns, for example, how a teacher education unit is governed. Other examples of process-oriented compliance criteria include: whether the curriculum guidelines of certain professional learned societies are consulted, whether the teacher education unit maintains a rigorous approach to quality control of instruction, and whether follow-up studies of graduates are conducted to assess the relevance of the professional curriculum. The key element in the NCATE standards – even before *Redesign* – is whether the teacher preparation curriculum is planned, conducted, and reviewed in specified ways. This focus on process is in sharp contrast to the Carnegie Task Force's emphasis on the key outcome question of what teachers should know and be able to do. Further, whereas the Holmes Group has one fundamental process-oriented standard – that professional education must be conducted at the graduate level – NCATE standards have literally dozens of such compliance criteria.

NCATE often has been criticized for placing too much emphasis on how teacher education is conducted and not enough emphasis on the substance of that preparation. Moreover, the standards and the compliance criteria are laden with vague and undefined terms. These ambiguities can be illustrated by returning to the example of the gover-

nance standard. What does it mean to "clearly specify" the governance system? How can one tell if the professional education unit's mission is "congruent" with the mission of the institution? What is entailed by the "participation" of practitioners and education students in unit governance? Similar vague terms in the old standards frequently have led NCATE to make accreditation judgments that are not consistent across institutions (Wheeler 1980).

To respond to this apparent lack of consistency, *NCATE Redesign* will use a new approach to selecting members of visiting teams. In the past, team members received modest, if any, training on how to apply the standards in a consistent and reliable way. Moreover, visiting team members often served only once a year, or even less frequently, and chairs of visiting teams often had to "train" their team members on the Sunday evening before the three-day site visit started. Under *Redesign*, all visiting team members will be drawn from a pool of several hundred members of a Board of Examiners. These members of the Board of Examiners will be selected for their skill in evaluation techniques and will be well trained in NCATE processes and standards (Gollnick and Kunkel 1986). Members of the Board of Examiners probably will serve twice a year on site review teams, thereby improving the consistency of their evaluations (Watts 1986).

Even if the use of well-trained site visitors does improve the consistency of NCATE evaluations across institutions, there remains the question of whether process-oriented standards – particularly detailed ones – distinguish good programs from bad. NCATE's assumption seems to be that if all institutions were to conduct their teacher education programs in roughly similar ways, we would have quality teacher education programming throughout the country. Although *NCATE Redesign* does leave some latitude as to how institutions can meet the various standards, I continue to be unsure why so much attention is given to program governance and other standards that regulate the process in which programs are planned and conducted. A good shot of outcome-oriented thinking, along the lines of the Carnegie Task Force's key question (What should teachers know and be able to do?), would go a long way toward clarifying what is entailed by quality teaching and, therefore, quality teacher education.

Conclusion

My plea is that we be both skeptical and very selective about accepting the recommendations from the various teacher education reform reports. There are many stimulating ideas in the reform reports; there are also ill-defined questions, incomplete rationales, questionable solutions, and unexamined assumptions. By using the five questions I posed at the beginning of this fastback as a framework for analyzing and evaluating reform proposals, the reader should be in a better position to make informed judgments. The magnitude of the proposals and their implications for teacher education and the teaching profession demand that we do no less.

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